

Bavarian News

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U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt and Garmisch

November 24, 2010

Paratrooper receives Medal of Honor

Giunta is first living Soldier to receive the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War

by U.S. Army Europe
Public Affairs
News Release

HEIDELBERG, Germany — President Barack Obama presented the Medal of Honor to Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta of U.S. Army Europe's 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team in a ceremony at the White House, Nov. 16.

Giunta earned America's highest honor for courage in combat for his actions during an ambush in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley in October 2007.

At the White House ceremony Obama recounted the sergeant's actions in Afghanistan, comparing him to fabled World War II hero Audie Murphy and calling Giunta "a Soldier as humble as he is heroic."

"I'm going to go off the script for a while and say, I really like this guy," Obama said to laughter and applause from the audience.

"When you meet (Giunta and his family) you are absolutely convinced this is what America is all about, and it just makes you proud," the president added.

Giunta's platoon was am-

bushed at close range by an enemy force. During the fire-fight that followed, Giunta, then a specialist, organized his squad to repel the attack and moved through enemy fire to help and recover wounded comrades.

"I didn't run up to do anything heroic," said Giunta during an interview shortly after the president called him in September to tell him he would get the Medal of Honor. "If I'm a hero, every man that stands around me, every woman in the military, everyone who goes into the unknown, is a hero."

The 25-year-old sergeant from Hiawatha, Iowa, enlisted in November 2003 and has served his entire military career with the 173rd's Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment. The brigade is based in Vicenza, Italy, with battalions stationed there and in Bamberg and Schweinfurt, Germany.

The nomination documents for the award recommended Giunta for the Medal of Honor for his "selfless actions and personal courage, which were decisive factors in changing the tide of the battle Despite bullets impacting on and around him, Spc. Giunta fearlessly advanced on the enemy and provided aid to his fallen comrades. His actions saved the lives of multiple paratroopers and changed the course of the battle in his platoon's favor."

Giunta is the first living



Photo by Richard Bumgardner

President Obama and a standing room only crowd applaud Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta after receiving the Medal of Honor at the White House, Nov. 16.

American Soldier to receive the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War, and the second Europe-based Soldier to earn it since the start of post 9/11 combat operations.

Spc. Ross McGinnis of 1st Infantry Division's Schweinfurt, Germany-based Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th

Infantry was posthumously awarded the medal in 2008 for saving the lives of his fellow team members by throwing himself on an enemy grenade during a firefight in Baghdad in 2006.

Earning the medal is bittersweet, Giunta said in his September interview.

"It's emotional and it's great...but it does bring back a lot of memories of all the people I would have loved to share this moment with. And I'm just not going to have that opportunity because they're no longer with us, because they gave everything for their country."

INSIDE



Vets-travaganza

Around Bavaria and beyond, the public pays homage to its heroes, past and present.

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Deploy the ... cartoonists

Well-known cartoonists from several comic strips pay a visit to deployed Soldiers in Afghanistan.

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Shoppers' delight

From handmade wooden ornaments to delicious baked goods, Christmas markets have it all.

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ESPN brings 'touch of America'

by Denver Makle

7th U.S. Army JMTC Public Affairs



Photo by Michael Beaton

ESPN anchors Hannah Storm and Josh Elliot broadcast live from the Grafenwoehr Parade Field on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. Thousands of Soldiers and community members attended the six-hour event despite chilly Bavarian weather.

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — A UH-60 Blackhawk flew in, on cue, landing just beyond the designated Warrior Challenge competition field, as Soldiers, family members, civilians and guests gathered at Grafenwoehr's Parade Field, Nov. 11, for ESPN's live broadcast of SportsCenter. Hosted by anchors Hannah Storm and Josh Elliot, the broadcast reaches an estimated 19 million viewers. It was a day to reflect and pay homage to America's heroes, past and present. After the helicopter landed, Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade made their way to the broadcast tent and received a hero's welcome. The Soldiers had rescued

several wounded German Soldiers, members of the Parachute Battalion 373, during an April 2 fight in Afghanistan.

"All of us were very nervous about meeting the Germans again," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason J. LaCrosse, the pilot. "Once we started talking to them the nerves went away. It was awesome to meet them."

LaCrosse said when he met Master Sgt. Bonneik, the German joint terminal attack controller (JTAC) that made the call for airlift and support he felt like he was meeting a brother.

"When he called me that day, he said the LZ (landing zone) was pretty hot," said LaCrosse. "I said to him it was cold enough for me."

See SOLDIERS, pages 4-5

Comedian brings laughs and lessons

Story and photos by

Molly Hayden
Staff Writer

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — It was a sea of camouflage at the Tower Theater, Nov. 16, as more than 500 Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, gathered for a comedy hour coupled with important training.

Comedian Bernie McGrenahan took the stage, coming on strong with a plethora of jokes poking fun at pop culture and everyday experiences.

McGrenahan's warm smile reeled in the audience quickly and his casual disposition (with jeans and Converse shoes to boot) made them feel comfortable. He laughed

along with the audience when he told jokes and strode across the stage showcasing overexaggerated body movements and facial expressions.

McGrenahan is a man's man. He's the kind of guy you could easily have a beer with — except he doesn't drink.

In-between short stabs at innocuous episodes of life, McGrenahan hid a lesson, a true story of reckless behavior and what it cost, borrowed from his adolescent self.

A self-proclaimed "partier" McGrenahan received three driving-under-the-influence tickets by the time he was 26, which landed him in a Los Angeles County jail for six months. The loss of his younger brother to suicide, provoked by his own alcohol and

See MCGRENAHAN, page 14



Bernie McGrenahan performs his "Happy Hour" comedy routine for 500 Soldiers at the Tower Theater, Nov. 16.

Defender 6 sends

Lynch says 'live your dash well'

Given the Army's 235-year history, resiliency is a relatively new word in our vocabulary. We hear it often nowadays, from the highest levels of leadership on down, as we talk about how we are addressing the effects of nine years of conflict. There may be a danger that someone will hear the word once too often and tune it out as the latest buzz word. However, we need to keep talking about it until every member of the Army community—every Soldier, Civilian and Family member—hears it and gets the message that we want them not only to survive, but to thrive.

A dictionary definition of resiliency is the ability to recover from misfortune or adjust easily to change. When we in the Army talk about resiliency, though, we are talking about more than the ability to bounce back from adversity. We are also talking about the ability to realize personal growth and development in the face of challenging situations. Resiliency is rooted in physical, mental and spiritual fitness. It is about

See RESILIENCY, page 2

Historic Covenant signed in Hohenfels

by Mark Iacampo

USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

HOHENFELS, Germany — In a historic move, U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels, Neumarkt County and the municipalities of Hohenfels, Lupburg, Parsberg and Velburg signed the first Sustainable Communities Partnership between the U.S. Army in Europe and a host nation at Parsberg Castle, recently.

"We have a great community that is dedicated and supportive of each other," said Col. John M. Spiszer, Joint Multinational Readiness Center commander. "This covenant is our commitment to continue working on improving our relationship."

The sustainability covenant's goal is to present opportunities for cooperation in economic, cultural and other areas between the Hohenfels Military Community and the County of Neumarkt and surrounding territories. The participants pledged to work together in the areas of renewable energies and environmental protection, as well as housing and quality of life.

"This Covenant is also designed to focus on an important aspect of what all of us need to do today — to become more sustainable in how we operate, work and live," said Spiszer. "This is necessary for all of us economically, as good neighbors, and as good stewards of this earth and its resources."

While the garrison has always had close relations with the

See COVENANT, page 14



Bavarian News

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Water Tower art by Dane Gray

Commander's Message



Community has much for which to be thankful

As we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday this week, please remember those things we should be thankful for: family, friends and life as we know it. I am thankful for the attitude amongst the community and the willingness of its members to help each other and learn.



During the holiday season, spend some time doing what is important to you to help you find balance and resilience. Lt. Gen. Lynch, commanding general of Installation Management Command, talks extensively about resilience (the article begins on the front page and continues in the next column) and the need to realize personal growth in the midst of challenging situations.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the programs the Army offers such as the Army Wellness Centers and Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, to bolster your and your family's resilience.

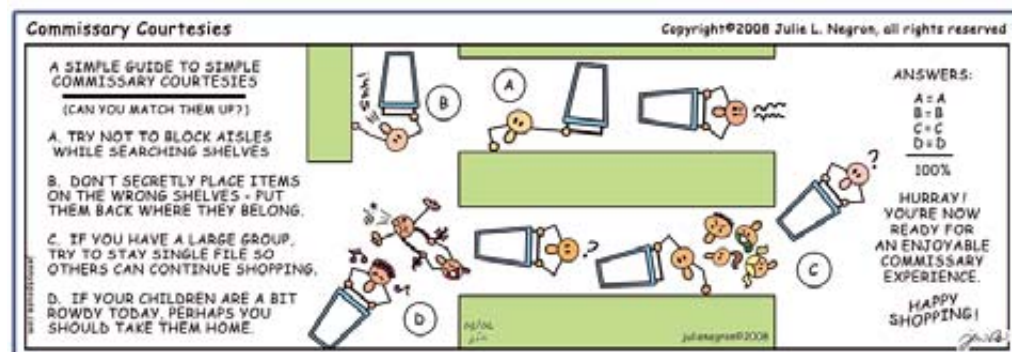
In addition to the programs the Army offers, please also take advantage of all the local opportunities offered to you by the community during the holiday season. The Christmas markets are a fantastic way to get out and enjoy local German customs and traditions (see page 11 for a listing of Christmas

markets all over Germany). Other venues such as our Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation activities, private organizations and clubs offer tremendous opportunities to take advantage of while living in Europe whether you are an art enthusiast, skier, shopper or just want to get out of the house.

As we approach our final stages of the Combined Federal Campaign pledge season, please take time to help the needy, especially as we approach the holiday season. Just last week as a community, we were roughly \$12,000 short of our goal as a community and more importantly you can make a difference in someone's life with just a small contribution. The campaign, which has run since Sept. 1, officially ends Dec. 15. Don't miss your chance to give back. Contact your unit or office representative for more information.

Finally, I want to thank the community for its tremendous patience and support. Feedback in the way of ICE, patience during construction, support during special events all show a collective effort and understanding on the part of community members and those chartered with providing services to help us improve so that we continue to make Grafenwoehr a great place to live and work.

*Col. Vann Smiley
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*



Grafenwoehr to compete for prestigious ACOE award

**U.S. Army Garrison
Grafenwoehr Public Affairs
News Release**

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr recently submitted its package to compete in the Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) program.

Six garrisons across Installation Management Command (IMCOM) will be selected as ACOE Award winners, and the first-place winner will receive \$1 million, which will be awarded to that garrison on May 5, 2011, in Washington D.C.

The Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) program is designed to encourage and reward installations that optimize operational environments; demonstrate a commitment to developing/sustaining quality facility and environmental infrastructure as well as services and programs in support of Soldiers, families and civilians. The ACOE program encourages installations' commitment to both excellence and sustainability through continuous improvement for achieving customer service satisfaction and quality.

In previous years, garrisons' submissions were evaluated against the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. This criterion helped provide organizations with an assessment on how well they provided and managed the delivery of improved value-added services and process to customers. However, the 2011 ACOE evaluation criteria will focus on garrison efforts in implementing and communicating the Installation Management Campaign Plan (IMCP) while still applying the basic Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

USAG Grafenwoehr along with other IM-

COM garrisons submitted garrison profiles, which showcase the garrisons' performance and efforts in implementation of the IMCP. In addition to discussing its efforts in implementing the IMCP, USAG Grafenwoehr also highlighted the partnership with Joint Multinational Training Command (JMTC) and the "One Community" concept created through joint efforts to provide world class services and support to the USAG Grafenwoehr Military Community.

ACOE is not just about identifying and pointing out the great things USAG Grafenwoehr Military Community does which includes the great services provided to our customers. The ACOE program also provides the garrison an opportunity to assess programs, services and identify gaps in the quality and performance levels in which the garrison should be providing services to the Soldiers, families and civilians.

In addition, by participating in ACOE, USAG Grafenwoehr can ask the three questions Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, IMCOM commander, charges us to ask ourselves every day:

- "Are we doing things right?"
- "Are we doing the right things?"
- "What are we missing?"
- "How can we do better?"

By answering those questions, USAG Grafenwoehr will continuously look to improve and enhance partnerships with customers, stakeholders, suppliers and our host nation partners. Going through and living the ACOE way of life creates an environment of continuous process improvement and always looking forward to creating a better future for the Grafenwoehr Military Community.

For more, contact Tim Ghormley at tim.ghormley@eur.army.mil or call 475-6701.



Interactive Customer Evaluation — or ICE — is an online customer comment program that lets you tell us what you think about the services and products you receive, and the facilities you use in our community. Login to the ICE site at <https://ice.disa.mil> and tell us what you think!

Resiliency involves taking time to refresh, recharge the batteries

Continued from page 1

finding the balance in your life between work, family and self, and living your dash-the line on the tombstone between the dates of birth and death-to the fullest.



During the last nine years of conflict, our Soldiers, civilians and family members have faced challenging situations, and in too many cases, tragedy. Multiple deployments and too little dwell time have strained our relationships.

We can see the stress manifest in rising rates of divorce, domestic violence, suicide and other destructive behaviors. We have to reverse the trends. We owe it to our Soldiers, civilians and family members to help them build the resiliency they need to cope with their challenges and come out stronger and better.

The Army is recognizing the stress and strain on our forces and families. We are making resiliency a priority and a part of Army culture, and have taken a number of steps to assess and build resiliency in our Soldiers, civilians and family members. One of the initiatives is the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program. The program is designed to enhance the resilience, readiness and potential of Soldiers, civilians and family members by building strength in every area of life: not just physical fitness, but also emotional, social, spiritual and family.

CSF is mandatory for Soldiers, but geared to the whole Army community, with components for family members and civilians as well. Soldiers, civilians and family members begin with the Global Assessment Tool, which measures strength in each of the five areas. The GAT is located at the CSF website, www.army.mil/csf. The results of the assessment direct an individualized training plan, which includes virtual training, classroom training and support from resilience experts. It is a long-term program, meant to help every member of our community succeed in his or her job and grow personally.

Army Wellness Centers

Another resource that helps Soldiers, civilians and family members build their resiliency are the Army Wellness Centers. Like the CSF, the Wellness Centers are focused on prevention. They are focused on helping individuals identify their problem areas and make positive changes for their health and well-being. Wellness Center programs include metabolic and fitness testing, nutrition education, weight management, stress management, and tobacco cessation.

One challenge for the Army is to make sure that every member of the Army community, including National Guard and Reserve Soldiers, and family members who are not located near an installation, have access to the resources they need to build resiliency. Every member needs to know what support exists for them and where they can access it.

We have plenty of great programs and services, such as the CSF program and Army Wellness Centers, but we need to make sure we are effective and

efficient in delivering them to the Army community members who can use them.

Resiliency Campus

In the spring I will be joining senior commanders and other Army leaders at Fort Hood to discuss the importance of resiliency and the different ways we are approaching the issue. We are meeting there to take a look at a bricks-and-mortar model, the Fort Hood Resiliency Campus. The Resiliency Campus is a one-stop shop where Soldiers, civilians and families can go to strengthen their mind, body and spirit. Composed of several buildings located next to each other, the campus offers a comprehensive array of services and programs, including spiritual and physical fitness programs, personal financial assistance, culinary classes, individual and family counseling, Warrior Adventure Quest and family programs.

Spiritual Fitness Center

The symposium will also consider the possibility of a virtual resiliency campus, which is in the beginning phases of conceptualization and development. IMCOM Headquarters' Chaplain Ministry Team will demonstrate a virtual Spiritual Fitness Center, which would be a core component of a virtual resiliency campus.

The virtual Spiritual Fitness Center will be accessible both as a conventional website and in Second Life, on the Army One Source Survivor Island web page. Both avenues will provide Soldiers, civilians and family members faith-based and non-faith-based resources for building their spiritual fitness.

The virtual campus merits serious consideration. Like a physical campus, it would offer a single point of access to assess needs and direct the individual to the best source of help, but it would also be available to Army community members anywhere and anytime. Ultimately, the symposium will consider what models of resiliency campuses, virtual and physical, can be standardized to benefit the whole Army.

The Army's focus on resiliency is important. It puts mental, emotional and spiritual fitness on par with physical fitness, all of which we need to perform successfully. It also acknowledges that the Soldiers who make up our all-volunteer Army and their family members need and want balance in their lives.

It is easy to get knocked off-balance by the challenges we face, which is why I encourage you to take the time to build your resiliency and find your balance. As I said, you have to live your dash.

For me, the dash signifies not only serving my country, but even more importantly, being a husband and father and making time for friends. When you are taking your last breaths, you are probably not going to wish you spent more time working, but more time doing the things you enjoy and being with the people you love.

Especially during the fast-approaching holiday season, take the time to do what recharges you, to spend time with those important to you, and ultimately, to live your dash well.

*Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch
Commander, Installation
Management Command*

Community discusses details of new high school

Story and photo by
Charles Stadtlander
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

SCHWEINFURT, Germany — The faces were weary filing into the Schweinfurt Middle School multipurpose room for a community town hall meeting. The parents and teachers attending had worked a long day and were certainly tired, but perhaps not quite as exhausted as Schweinfurt’s high school students, who currently leave before six in the morning to reach Bamberg, where the closest DoDDS high school is now. These students have the most at stake in the upcoming decision to open a high school in Schweinfurt, and correspondingly they had much to say at the town hall forum.

Mike Thompson, the superintendent for DoDDS Bavaria district, moderated the community conversation. According to him, plans are in place for the high school, which would be in what is now the middle school. Final approval for the project rests with DoDEA headquarters.

“Right now, the paperwork is sitting on the director’s desk in Arlington, Virginia,” said Thompson. He added that a final answer should arrive within several weeks. The conversation of the evening, how-



Lt. Col. Everett Spain welcomes the crowd to a town hall meeting on Monday, Nov. 8, to discuss the prospective opening of Schweinfurt High School for the 2011-2012 school year. Superintendent of DoDDS Bavaria, Mike Thompson, moderated the discussion, which generated great interest and support for the proposed institution.

ever, treated whether or not a school would open as a foregone conclusion and focused on how the new school would function.

The hottest topic of the evening was availability of extracurricular

activities. With a student body half the size of what Bamberg currently fields, some parents expressed concerns about the loss of some athletic programs due to lack of participation.

“**We can give you buildings, we can give you teachers, but it’s up to everyone involved here to make this into a high school.**

Mike Thompson
Superintendent for
DoDDS Bavaria district

Lt. Col. Everett Spain responded to these doubts with insistence that the students and community will rise to the challenge. He puts faith in the high school students to fill up available programs and in the community to support the students in this bold new endeavor.

A pressing concern for the prospective students in attendance was the issue of school uniforms. Thompson insisted this is a decision for our community to make, not for

higher-ups in DoDDS or DoDEA. Though in a moment of candor that was met with cheers and applause, Thompson stated, “I don’t believe we need uniforms in the high school.”

The Department of Defense Education Activity, or DoDEA, consists of two school systems: the DoD Dependents Schools, known as DoDDS, which is the overseas school system, and the DoD Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary, or DDESS, the domestic school system.

The student-teacher ratio, Thompson estimates, will be about 20 to 1, a number that parents in attendance seemed impressed with.

Much discussion of logistics of the new school ensued, including questions as to inclement weather policies, AP classes offered, mascots and school colors.

In the end, Thompson reminded the crowd that it has the gift of responsibility for customizing these policies. He said it’s not up to him or any administration, but to the members of the Schweinfurt education community.

“These are community decisions,” Thompson said. “We can give you buildings, we can give you teachers, but it’s up to everyone involved here to make this into a high school.”

Army Reserve culinary decorations are the center of attraction

Intricate figurines are sculpted from scratch

Story and photo by
Susanne Bartsch
USAG Grafenwoehr Public Affairs

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — This year, three Army Reserve Soldiers are members of the U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team from Fort Lee, Va., that will compete in the Culinary World Cup in Luxemburg, Nov. 20-25.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Parker of the 841st Engineer Battalion, Miami, Fla.; Spc. Jeffrey Vaughan assigned to the 55th Sustainment Brigade from Ft. Belvoir, Va.; and Sgt. Trent Skinner of the 645th Transportation Company (Inland Cargo) from Las Vegas, Nev., are the first Army Reserve Soldiers to be appointed to the team, which has been a joint team, open to service members from all branches, since 2008.

While Parker and Vaughan are team apprentices, Skinner is producing the team’s centerpiece and seven figurines to go with each one of the seven, three-course meals presented in the Culinary World Cup’s cold food presentation. As their sculp-



From left to right: Staff Sgt. Joseph Parker, Spc. Jeffrey Vaughan and Sgt. Trent Skinner work on sculptures for the 2010 U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team display at the Culinary World Cup competition in Luxemburg, Nov. 20-25.

tor, he will be competing for medals along with the six other members of the competition team.

Skinner, 40, is a freelance sculptor who does ornamental sculpturing and ice carving in his hometown of Las Vegas. Serving on active duty from 1987 to 1998, and a former USACAT alternate in the early ‘90s, he joined the Army Reserve in August 2009 and is now back on the team.

“I love cooking because it allows you to be creative every day,” said Skinner.

As a member of the Army Reserve, he and the other members of his branch’s culinary arts team train together every quarter. When training at the Metropolitan Community Col-

lege at Omaha, Neb., some Soldiers even get the chance to take classes that allow them to earn points for their next promotion.

Skinner is thankful for the opportunity to be on the team again and stated he is glad that he and two of his Army Reserve teammates got to go together.

“Being on the team is not just about competing, it’s learning from the others and taking stuff back to the other (Army Reserve Culinary Arts) team members,” he said while he worked on one of the sculptures for the cold food display at Grafenwoehr Training Area in Germany.

The team trains there every two See RESERVISTS, page 14

Philadelphia Marathon returns to Hohenfels

by Mark Iacampo
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

HOHENFELS, Germany — Though the 2nd Annual Philadelphia Marathon First Wave Warrior Race 5K took place more than a week before the world-renowned race in Pennsylvania, participants in the Hohenfels event also played an active part in the race back home.

Video footage and photos from the First Wave run were broadcast on giant screens set up along the course of the marathon, and Hohenfels contestants even provided a video countdown to start the Philadelphia event.

“This is the second time that Hohenfels has been honored to be partnered with the fantastic city of Philadelphia,” said Kevin J. Quarles, U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels commander. “We just want to give a great big shout out to Philadelphia. We’re proudly serving here, and we’re really proud and honored to be able to start your race for you!”

The First Wave runs are the brain child of Rob Powers, official announcer of the Philadelphia Marathon and founder of the Warrior Tours whose mission is to help build the resiliency of American’s armed forces by connecting world class Americans and events with the troops.

“We came up with the concept of first wave racing as a direct result of my job,” said Powers. Billed as “America’s Voice of Running,” Powers has been announcing races for more than 22 years. “I just got tired of going to these huge running races that I’m hired to announce and getting handed a tiny little slip of paper on race day that would have maybe a first and last name and maybe a time as the results from the shadow run that took place the same day somewhere in the world.”

“I’d open up the paper in San Francisco and read three columns worth of reporting on the San Francisco marathon,” said Powers, “and then I’d read about half an inch on the third quarter that might say, ‘Oh and in Afghanistan, the San Francisco marathon was run and was won by an Air Force lieutenant in a time of whatever,’ and that would be it.”

Powers’ solution was to stage First Wave races, sometimes months before the corresponding stateside marathon.

“We come over, meet the troops, spend time with them,” said Powers. “We collect the results, photos, video,

and hand it over to these various race committees and allow their media teams to incorporate these stories, these images, into the race weekend’s media blitz.”

Powers said Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter devoted a huge portion of the press conference Friday night on the eve of the Philadelphia marathon to showing videos and photos of the First Wave race. Powers himself gave a briefing to the press core on this year’s event, speaking on behalf of Warrior Tours and USAG Hohenfels.

“We’re not just coming over here to put on another T-shirt run,” said Powers. “We’re coming over here so that the members of this community know how important they are, and incorporating their heart and soul into one of America’s major international marathons.”

First place finisher Capt. Luke Mercier, Joint Multinational Readiness Center Falcons Aviation Support Team, said he didn’t know the garrison event was getting so much attention; he just came for the run.

“It’s a good connection back to the states, though,” he said. “My sister lives in Pennsylvania. Maybe she’ll catch a little of it on TV.”

Mercier finished with a time of 18:34.

First place in the female division went to 13-year-old Amanda Elliott with a time of 20:36. Elliot placed fourth in cross country at the Europeans held the previous week.

Powers said this was the first time Warrior Tours had returned to the same location for an annual event. “And the mayor wants to see this Hohenfels relationship just to continue to roll on.”

“Mayor Nutter is the first mayor I’ve run into that has not only let me know that the mission of warrior tours is one he embraces and supports, but as well allows the Philadelphia Marathon — the city’s biggest outdoor event — to ring with freedom, ring with our troops, and the pride that that city has for America’s Armed Forces,” said Powers.

Spc. William Stevens, Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, appreciates the sentiment.

“Some of us are overseas two or three years,” he said. “So to bring a piece of home like this means a lot. Some of these kids are away from their families for the first time, and it means a little bit more to participate in something like this.”

Training challenges German-American law enforcement

by Lt. Eric Miller
Department of the Army Police

GARMISCH, Germany — The Garmisch Directorate of Emergency Services hosted a German-American joint active shooter response exercise in the old club building on Artillery Kaserne.

German law enforcement agencies participating included local Polizei trainers, Polizei active shooter response team members, and German soldiers of the Feldjaeger Special Weapons and Tactics team out of Murnau. A broad range of tactics and response methods was covered.

The training events were conducted using both organic and mixed teams. It enabled the American MPs to hone their skills and gain knowledge of new tactics; it also allowed them to meet IMCOM requirements regarding active shooter training. This team-training event strengthened everyone’s respective tactical response capabilities and skill sets while also reinforcing the German-American relationship with host nation agencies, further developing professional and personal rapport. Conducting joint



Photo by Spc. Derek Briggs

Three MPs and a Department of the Army policeman, all in body armor, prepare to enter the simulated danger zone.

training benefits coordination and improves the working partnership between the Garmisch MPs and their German military and civilian counterparts.

Familiarization with each other’s tactic in the event of a joint response to an active shooter situation ensures an effective reaction.

The training was very successful, and once completed a barbecue followed at the MP station to further strengthen the bonds of German-American law enforcement.

Members of the 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade hoist their trophy after winning the ESPN Warrior Challenge, part of the ESPN SportsCenter broadcast. The 172nd narrowly captured the title after edging out the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion by a half point.

Photo by Michael Beaton



172nd Inf. Bde. takes home the Warrior Challenge title

by Maj. Joseph P. Buccino

172nd Infantry Brigade Public Affairs

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Going into the Nov. 11 ESPN Veterans Day broadcast, the 172nd Infantry Brigade “Blackhawks” were heavily favored to win the network’s second annual Warrior Challenge competition. The brigade, the largest in Europe, was competing against six units in a tournament comprised of six events that tested combat skills and physical fitness readiness such as grenade toss, litter carry and PLS tire flip. The brigade’s selected six-man team won the tournament during the live broadcast, earning an expected victory. But it wasn’t easy.

It took three weeks of backbreaking daily physical and mental training, six hours of grueling competition, bitter temperatures, and a last-second comeback that captured the imagination of the thousands on-hand and the 19 million watching at home. But in the end, the Blackhawks were able to fend off the furiously upset-minded 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion “War Hammers” to win by the smallest possible margin of victory.

The event began with the first hour of live broadcast just after 3 p.m. The Blackhawks quickly separated themselves from the pack, but were rattled by their inability to take a lead. Going into the final two events, tug-of-war and equipment transport relay, the 172nd was losing, stunned by the athleticism, acumen and brute strength displayed by their 18th CSSB rivals.

As day turned into night and an agreeable climate turned into freezing rain, the six men felt the icy fingers of vanquished dreams.



Photo by Angela Wellein

Soldiers compete in the equipment transfer relay portion of the Warrior Challenge Competition on Veterans Day.

Despite the crippling weight of a humiliating defeat hanging heavily on their conscience, the shell-shocked Soldiers gathered the resilient strength to grind through the 709th MP Battalion, the 173rd Infantry Brigade, and the 18th CSSB in successive tug-of-war competitions.

Entering the final challenge, the Blackhawks were down by a half point to the War Hammers.

Here, Staff Sgt. Andrew Hasbrouck, 172nd Infantry Brigade Warrior Challenge Team NCO-IC, believed the brigade’s “team of teams” concept was the difference.

Afterward, an exhausted and introspective 1st Lt. Aaron Silver, brigade team OIC, quietly reflected on the meaning of the victory. “This shows everyone that we have a high level of esprit de corps as a brigade and a high level of cohesion,” Silver said.

18th CSSB supports ESPN from start to finish

by Capt. Jennifer Dyrce

18th CSSB Public Affairs

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Long before the crowds arrived and way after the celebrities flew home, the Soldiers of the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, supported the ESPN Veterans Day live broadcast from the Grafenwoehr Training Area here by setting up and tearing down the two large fest tents, which housed most of the holiday’s festivities.

“This is a big job and we had to ask for more Soldiers to support this than we had first intended, but the Soldiers are really putting their all into this so it is completed on time,” said Staff Sgt. Elliot Nelson prior to the event. Nelson is with the 5th Maintenance Company and provided oversight of the setup crew.

“I’m happy to support, and I think it is nice ESPN

is coming all the way out to Germany to show their support to our veterans,” said Sgt. Steven Son, who works as a movement noncommissioned officer in charge for the 1st Inland Cargo Transfer Company.

It was not just the outside work which had the Soldiers running around; some were assigned as personal assistants to the ESPN personalities making coffee and running errands.

“Everyone sees the big show, but most of the time, people forget all the man hours which go into making the show come off seamlessly. It’s the ‘Warhammers’ behind the scenes who deserve our appreciation and thanks for the hard work they do,” said Lt. Col. Reed Hudgins, 18th CSSB commander.

The setup took place Nov. 1-4 through various patches of sunshine or rain, and the same 15 Soldiers were used to tear down and pack away the tents.



Photo by Spc. Robert Lynds

Spc. Anthony Wiatriek (left), a wheeled vehicle mechanic, along with Pfc. Eric Hobson, a fire control repairer, both with 5th Maintenance Company, work to move a beam into place during fest setup in preparation for ESPN SportsCenter’s live Veterans Day broadcast from the Grafenwoehr Training Area.



Photo by Gertrud Zach

Soldiers from the 709th MP Battalion flip a PLS tire during the Warrior Challenge Competition.

Soldiers, community shine on ESPN

Continued from page 1

He started crying on the ground because of what I said.”

Both LaCrosse and Bonneik said there is a special bond between the Soldiers.

“We were in combat for five hours trying to secure the LZ,” said Bonneik. “He (LaCrosse) told me he was going to land right next to the wounded. He felt safe because we defended his helicopter. That’s how we managed to kill seven Taliban that tried to encircle us.”

The decision was made between pilot and JTAC that the second Blackhawk would provide suppressing fire from the air, instead of the usual security for the first aircraft.

The Germans continued the fight to protect their wounded and the medics providing first response.

The wounded Soldiers said meeting them again brought healing to their hearts and souls. They met 10 members of the 14-member medical evacuation (medevac) crew that rescued them that day during the live broadcast.

Star-Spangled Banner

Immediately following the entrance and welcome of the Soldiers, 1st Lt. Gwynn A. Miller of the 709th Military Police Battalion sang an a cappella version of the “Star-Spangled Banner.”

“I’m honored and very nervous,” said Miller, during rehearsal. “Privileged is also one word that describes how I feel. I get a chill every time I hear the anthem.”

Miller, a self-proclaimed Army brat turned Soldier, says her mother gave her a guide for determining if she was ready to become a Soldier herself. “My mom was a Soldier,” said Miller. “She told me, ‘Gwynn, you’ll know if you want to join the Army because when you hear the anthem. You’ll get a chill.’”

After little more than two years in the Army, Miller sang a heartfelt anthem for millions.

Gold Star wives

Brig. Gen. Steven L. Salazar,



Photo by Gertrud Zach

A Soldier and his daughter wave for the cameras during ESPN’s live broadcast from Grafenwoehr on Veterans Day.

commanding general of the Joint Multinational Training Command, recognized three Gold Star wives during opening events. The wives received a standing ovation in recognition of their personal sacrifices.

“This is on behalf of all the Soldiers serving in the war currently, and those who have served in the past,” said 2nd Lt. Scott S. Gorski of the 69th Signal Battalion. “It’s great.”

Sgt. 1st Class James R. Nejeski said the broadcast had greater significance. “It gives the Soldiers a little touch of home. A lot of Soldiers watch SportsCenter,” said Nejeski. “It gives them a little reach back to America.”

In addition to the capacity crowd, ESPN also received a boost of support from the garrison.

“Logistical support is usually the hardest part of planning an event of this size,” said John Winslow, an operations specialist with the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr. Seventy-five percent of the set up was DPW (Department of Public Works) requirements.”

The DPW staff is local nationals, and there were a lot of extensive hours. They made sure it happened, said Winslow.

Downrange participation

Even Soldiers downrange in Iraq and Afghanistan participated in the Veterans Day extravaganza.

“We very much are a team. We



Soldiers of the 172nd Infantry Brigade compete in the tug-of-war portion of the Warrior Challenge Competition, which was part of ESPN’s live broadcast of SportsCenter on Veterans Day.

Photo by Gertrud Zach

are lucky we have a chance to serve our nation, while we are at war,” said Col. James R. Blackburn, commander of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, which deployed from Vilseck, Germany, this summer. Blackburn was beamed in via satellite, live from Qalat, Afghanistan. He spoke openly about his current deployment.

“This is something most people will never experience, and this is the most significant thing we will have the chance to do in our lifetimes.”

Like every duty day, the SportsCenter broadcast closed with a retreat ceremony.

Col. Vann Smiley, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr commander, explained the military custom for the viewing audience.

A four-person bugle corps sounded the retreat, and the audience showed the appropriate honors and saluted as the flag came down, officially ending the live portion of the show.

“The significance of the two flags, German and American, is that as a nation, we are not going it alone,” said Smiley.

Immediately following, Salazar presented the ESPN Warrior Challenge trophy to the winners, the 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade



Photo by Gertrud Zach

Soldiers of the 18th CSSB cheer for their team.



Photo by Spc. Daniel Luksan

Pfc. David Eugene Miller, 615th MP Co., and Brig. Gen. Steven Salazar, JMTC commanding general, square off in a pushup competition.

Grafenwoehr’s Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios lends his grilling expertise on steaks donated by Cooks from the Valley.

Photo by Gertrud Zach



Grafenwoehr’s Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios lends his grilling expertise on steaks donated by Cooks from the Valley.

Photo by Gertrud Zach



Photo by Jeremy S. Buddemeier

A UH-60 Blackhawk lands on the parade field and delivers Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade to officially kick off ESPN’s live broadcast from Grafenwoehr.

Combat Team.

“It’s been absolutely fantastic to have you here to see these great Soldiers. As I said earlier, you’ve got sports heroes, and you’ve got American heroes,” Salazar said.

“ESPN today has given America the chance to see both of them; our sports heroes today, but, of course, our American heroes every day. I really appreciate you giving us the chance to do that.”

Around Bavaria and beyond

Czechs are still grateful to liberators

Story and photos by

Nick D’Amario

Acting Public Affairs Officer

ROKYCANY, Czech Republic — While Veterans Day is celebrated in the United States and every U.S. military community worldwide, it is also celebrated in countries where the past deeds and heroism of American Soldiers have left their mark in history.

One such place is Rokycany, just east of the city of Plzen in the Czech Republic - a town liberated by U.S. Soldiers at the end of World War II and famous for its demarcation line and monument. The monument, funded by the Veterans of Foreign Wars and unveiled in 1996, is representative of the 1945 agreement between the U.S. and Russians that U.S. forces would not advance further east than Plzen - even though Gen. George S. Patton’s Third Army actually ventured as far east as Prague before being ordered to pull back.

This year’s celebration, hosted by the VFW’s Department of Europe District 3 Commander Pete Mascetti, included special appearances by nine cadets from Vilseck High School’s 18th JROTC “Falcon” Battalion.

“This yearly trip gives young cadets of the battalion an exposure to a real slice of history that only living this close to the Czech Republic can afford. I only wish that the kids could spend more time there,” said retired Sgt. 1st Class Mitchell Pollock, the JROTC Army instructor who has been accompanying cadets to Rokycany’s annual VFW event the past five years.

Highlights of the annual



VFW members and dignitaries salute while the U.S. national anthem is played in front of Rokycany’s city hall, Nov. 14.



Cadets of the 18th JROTC “Falcon” Battalion, Vilseck High School, gather in Rokycany’s town center following the blessing-of-the-flags ceremony, Nov. 13.

celebration included a blessing-of-the-flags ceremony, featuring the JROTC Falcon Battalion, at Rokycany’s Virgin Mary of the Snow Church, and a wreath laying ceremony in the town’s center where hundreds of local citizens and squads of Czech World War II re-enactors gathered with VFW members, friends and dignitaries to provide outstanding support for the dozens of veterans and family members present.

Even after 65 years, it is evident the Czech people are grateful to U.S. Soldiers for their liberation from German occupation those many years ago. Whether young or old, Czechs come out in impressive numbers every year to observe or participate in the event, and continue to treat the veterans with the respect and hospitality.

Hal Hedges, VFW Post

9334 member and a former VFW Department of Europe commander, is a World War II, Korean War and Vietnam veteran; he worked with former Rokycany mayor Vaclav Beneda in 1990 to organize the first annual Veterans Day celebrations.

This year, two VFW members made the trip from the U.S. — Frank Marsh and Thaddeus Jones (Texas), and Gwen Rankin, senior vice president of the Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW, traveled from Hawaii.

Whatever the reason these men and women of the VFW have for coming to Rokycany each year, they are undeniably ambassadors for continued good relations with our Czech neighbors. It is clear, from the continued warm response by Czechs at these VFW celebrations, that our veterans will be remembered for generations to come.

Remembering the fallen



Photo by Mark Iacampo

Clockwise from above: Members of the 9th Engineer Battalion bow their heads for a moment of silence during a ceremony held on Ledward Barracks, Nov. 10. The Hohenfels Elementary School choir listens for the “Heart of America” as they perform a trio of songs at the Veterans Day ceremony at Hohenfels, Nov. 10. Grafenwoehr Mayor Helmut Waechter speaks to attendees at the Veterans Day ceremony at the Grafenwoehr Rathaus, Nov. 14.



Photo by Gerald Morgenstern

18th Eng. Bde. trains on Warrior Tasks

Story and photos by
Spc. Aislinn Amig
18th Eng. Bde. Public Affairs

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Battling the cold, wet and foggy weather, Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 18th Engineer Brigade conducted Army Warrior Task Training here, Nov. 2-7.

Soldiers from the company and the staff focused on tasks such as weapon familiarization, land navigation skills, squad movement techniques, radio communications, first aid, and nuclear, biological, and chemical decontamination.

“This training reinforced the Soldier tasks that we were all taught at the earlier part of our careers,” said Maj. Charles Hall, 18th Eng. Bde. adjutant and a native of Wake Forest, N.C. “It gave us, as leaders, the opportunity to work with Soldiers outside our normal staff sections, assess their skills, knowledge and abilities, and execute the task to standard.”

On the final day of training, Soldiers were tested on their ability to move through certification lanes as a squad. They had to react to contact, transmit reports over the radio and evacuate casualties, all while trying to occupy their objective.



Pfc. Andrew Lincoln, a combat security team Soldier with the 18th Engineer Brigade, fires the M-240B machine gun as Sgt. Rennato Lopez, a maintenance noncommissioned officer, serves as a range safety and Pfc. Robert Cruz, a combat engineer, acts as a forward observer, Nov. 4

“I think it was important for team building,” said Capt. Ingrid Bruning, a battle captain for 18th Eng. Bde. and a native of Waterport, N.Y. “Everyone’s experience level is different, and it was good that we could all add something and apply our knowledge to a real-world scenario.”

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Felix San-Miguel, a prime power technician for 18th Eng. Bde. and a native of Guam,



Capt. Kathryn Werback, public affairs officer for 18th Engineer Brigade, directs Staff Sgt. Edson Rodriguez, an intelligence analyst, during Army Warrior Task certification for leaders, Nov. 5

said the certification was a great opportunity to learn as a leader, and it emphasized the importance of planning and preparation when conducting a mission.

Multiple ranges were coordinated so that Soldiers could qualify not only on their assigned weapons, but also on the M-240B machine gun, MK19 auto-

matic grenade launcher, M2 .50-caliber machine gun and M249 squad automatic weapon.

Following the range density week, the 18th Eng. Bde. Soldiers conducted a command post exercise, Nov. 8-12, to validate their Army Battle Command Systems and prepare the staff for their upcoming validation exercise.

Deployed Soldiers celebrate Native American Heritage

by **Sgt. Audrey Glynn**
2SCR Public Affairs

ZABUL, Afghanistan — Soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base Lagman in Zabul Province, Afghanistan, took some time to recognize and celebrate National Native American Heritage Month, Nov. 15.

During a luncheon at the Mykel Miller Dining Facility, troops gathered to listen to a motivational speech and Native American poetry presented by Soldiers of Native American descent.

Spc. Jessica Avila read the poem, “Navajo Code Talkers” about Native American service members who fought during World War II and how they communicated through the use of special codes. Their ability to use their own native languages, completely unknown to enemy forces, to safeguard and transmit secret information proved to be a crucial aspect of the Allied victory.

First Lt. Michael McCoy, a platoon leader in Nomad Troop, Fires Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, spoke of his time growing up on a reservation and the wisdom he gained from his elders.

“My grandmother taught me to have a universal respect for things, not just people ... but for all life,” McCoy said. “She used to tell me how we are all a part of this earth regardless of which tribe we belong to ... we all have our place and our purpose.”

“When I’m asked the question, ‘What are you?’ I always reply, ‘I’m a human being.’”

Cartoonists are ‘a draw’ for coalition troops

Story and photo by
Spc. Jennifer Spradlin
16th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP HOLLAND, Afghanistan — Three well-known cartoonists visited coalition troops at Camp Holland, Afghanistan, Nov. 10, as part of an USO-sponsored morale tour. Additionally, cartoonists Rick Kirkman, creator of the comic strip “Baby Blues,” Mike Luckovich, a Pulitzer Prize winning editorial cartoonist and Garry Trudeau, the creator of “Doonesbury,” visited Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Lagman in Zabul Province the same day.

Jeff Keane, cartoonist for the “Family Circus,” Stephen Pastis, creator of “Pearls Before Swine,” and Tom Richmond, the featured artist for “Mad Magazine,” have spent the last week travelling to different bases across Afghanistan to draw and autograph souvenirs for Soldiers.

A total of six cartoonists have partnered with the USO for the Afghanistan tour. This is the third year cartoonists have visited Soldiers; they



Stephan Pastis, creator of “Pearls Before Swine,” draws some of the characters from his comic strip for a coalition member during a USO event at Camp Holland, Afghanistan, Nov. 10. Pastis said that drawing for service members is the highlight of his year.

previously spent time with wounded Soldiers in Germany, and Soldiers deployed to Kuwait and Iraq.

“The reaction has been really great. I think I get more out of it than the Soldiers do,” said Pastis, whose comic has run in newspapers since 2002.

Pastis said Soldiers were gracious and excited to meet with him, and drawing for them is always the highlight of his year.

“I tell all the cartoonists that haven’t gone that they should go. It’s so rewarding.

A whole different experience,” said Pastis.

Jeff Keane’s father Bil Keane, the creator of Family Circus, visited American troops in Vietnam in 1968. Jeff Keane took over the comic when his father retired and carried on his father’s tradition of bringing a piece of home to deployed service members.

“It was something that I remember quite clearly from when I was a kid. When this opportunity when came, it was one of those things that I thought ‘yeah, I would love

to do it,’” said Keane. Family Circus has been featured in newspapers since 1960.

Keane said he felt these tours were an opportunity to remind troops that their service is appreciated back home.

“I think it is really important to continue to support the troops. For me, it’s not a political thing. They deserve to know that back home people think of them all the time and are aware of them being here,” said Keane.

There is a USO location in every major American airport

and several locations throughout the Middle East to provide service members with positive recreation outlets and to help them maintain contact with their families.

Even where there aren’t fixed USO locations, morale tours, such as the cartoonist tour, reach out to deployed service members.

“I believe it’s important for the Soldiers to have these kinds of events because it reminds them of home and it gives them something a little out of the ordinary to break up the monotony of day-to-day soldiering tasks,” said Staff Sgt. Bryan Sewell, 1-245th Aviation Operations Battalion, Oklahoma National Guard. The 1-245th AOB have been deployed to Camp Holland for six weeks.

Like many of the other Soldiers, Sewell had his cartoon autographed to his children.

“My kids have been telling me that they want me to send them rocks or other little souvenirs, but this is something I think they will definitely enjoy,” said Sewell.

To learn more about the USO, visit www.uso.org.

88th Chaplain Detachment returns from deployment

Story and photo by
Spc. Glenn M. Anderson
7th Civil Support Command Public Affairs

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Two Army Reserve Soldiers assigned to the 7th Warrior Training Brigade, 7th Civil Support Command returned from their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn, Nov. 2.

Maj. Robert Crawford, commander of the 88th Chaplain Detachment, and Staff Sgt. Joel H. Trammell, Jr., noncommissioned officer in charge, deployed to Forward Operating Base Camp Bucca, Iraq, with the 1st Infantry Division in January 2010 to assist with religious activities there.

The Soldiers flew into Ramstein Air Base and were welcomed home by members of the command group and special staff. From there, the two Soldiers were brought to the 7th CSC headquarters on Daenner Kaserne here where everyone from the unit was waiting to officially welcome them home.

“I felt gratitude that the 7th CSC was there to greet us as we stepped out



Maj. Robert Crawford, commander, 88th Chaplain Detachment, 7th Warrior Training Brigade, 7th Civil Support Command, and Staff Sgt. Joel H. Trammell Jr., 88th Chaplain Det. NCOIC, return from deployment to Iraq with the 1st Infantry Division.

of the van,” said Trammell. “After being gone for so long it was great to see the folks again.”

Trammell was awarded an Army Commendation Medal by the 1st Infantry Division for his performance in Iraq, along with a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal.

“It was an experience that I will never forget,” said Trammell. “Helping so many people and working with different cultures is something that only happens in most people’s lives once.”

“We had the chance to see so many

things,” added Trammell. “We assisted with suicide intervention, bible studies, music for Sunday services and even helped set up the choir.”

The 88th Chaplain Det.’s mission while based out of Camp Bucca was to support the training mission and restoration of Umm Qasr Port in Iraq. This allowed Crawford and Trammell the opportunity to meet with local nationals and other service members during their deployment.

“The real work was with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast

Guardsmen — helping them deal with the stresses of combat and being separated from their families,” said Crawford, who received a Bronze Star while downrange.

Crawford said he will always recall some very unique challenges and some very memorable events.

One of these events was the donation of a Camp Bucca flag to the widow of New York City Fire Marshal Ronald Bucca who died at the World Trade Center Sept. 11, 2001, and for whom the camp is named. Crawford presided over the Memorial Service held at Camp Bucca, Sept. 11, 2010.

“Serving as an area unit ministry team working alongside of not only Army but Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Ugandans, we were able to move around and see operations from a variety of perspectives,” said Crawford. “It was a great opportunity for both of us.”

Although the two Army Reserve Soldiers are in processing and getting accustomed to life back in Germany, they will never forget their deployment and the impact the 88th Chaplain Det. had throughout Camp Bucca.

Score one for the community



Courtesy photo

Members of the military community are invited to a family skate night and holiday party sponsored by the Bayern Rangers ice hockey team, Dec. 8, at the team’s practice facility in Pegnitz. The team will be on the ice from 6:30-8 p.m. starting with 45 minutes of open skating, followed by 45 minutes of shinny hockey. The rink address is Badstrasse 1, 91257 Pegnitz (behind Aldi). For more, check the Bayern Rangers’ Facebook page.

Ancient history provides perspective

Europe Regional Medical Command

News Release

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Standing at ground level, raising their eyes up to the hard stone and cold brick of the Coliseum in Rome, Spc. Jonathan Locke and his wife Ashley were not exactly thinking about architecture. Their thoughts, instead, turned to the thousands of Christians that had been slain in ancient times virtually at their feet. And then, their resolve to overcome their own difficulties instantaneously grew.

The Lockes were two of a group of nearly 50 warriors, their families and cadre members of the Warrior Transition Battalion-Europe who volunteered for a weeklong retreat to Rome and the Vatican City. They were taking part in an exercise focused not on building physical strength, though the tour walks were indeed long.

Instead, the trip focused on building their spiritual strength. During the four-day stay, participants visited a number of select sites that supported the trip's theme, "Memorials of Faith." These were sites where members of the early Christian church faced torture or death following what they believed.

By studying what the early church went through, participants hopefully would come away with a stronger sense of what is possible in the face of difficult change. It was sponsored by the WTB-E chaplain's office and supported by the Vicenza garrison and Europe Regional Medical Command he chaplains.

"We've had a number of retreats for Wounded Warriors and their families north of the Alps," said the WTB-E's Chaplain (Capt.) Eric Dean. "The opportunities for the folks from Vicenza to join us on them were few."

He said he worked with the USO Rome to provide visits to the Vatican City, the Coliseum, the Pantheon and other historic sites where Christians and others had overcome persecution and built



Chaplain (Capt.) Eric Dean, right, the Warrior Transition Battalion-Europe chaplain, explains the history of the Roman persecution of the early Christians at a stop inside the Roman Coliseum. More than 50 Warriors in Transition, their families and cadre members attended the weeklong trip.

Photo by Phil Tegtmeier

When you can't do your job in your unit, you feel like nobody wants you around. In a WTU, everyone has the same job – to heal.

Spc. Carlos Mendoza
Kleber Warrior Transition Unit

lasting organizations.

"Standing here, thinking about the places we've seen, I understand truly that when you come through something like what the early Christians do, you build something. People will remember your legacy," Locke said. "I know what Soldiers go through when they're injured and can't do their job. But I also know that if I stay with my plans to return to duty, I plan to help others understand what it (being assigned to a Warrior Transition Unit) is really like, how helpful it can be."

Like Locke, Spc. Carlos Mendoza from the Kleber WTU thinks that most Soldiers lack a clear understanding of Warrior Transition units.

"I was in the first WTU in Europe when it stood up, so I've seen all the changes as they came around," Mendoza said. "Sure, there may have been a time when

everyone with any kind of problem got 'dumped' on the WTU, but the selection process is much better now. Not just anyone gets in."

Not only is the process more selective, Mendoza said, the cadres have become more experienced and garrison offices that support them have continually improved access to assistance for our Warriors in Transition.

"If you come to a WTU, you come to heal," Mendoza said. "You make formations, you make your appointments, you do what you are able to do. That's your job. That's your focus. If you get assigned to a WTU and try to milk the system, try to stay in it as long as you can, you'll fail. I've seen it happen, and I think a lot of Soldiers see the few malingerers and think everyone in a WTU is like that."

Mendoza said that he was go-

ing to go back from the retreat even more dedicated to returning to duty. While his physical problem does not require him to reclassify if he returns to duty, he is at a career point where he can re-enlist for a different job.

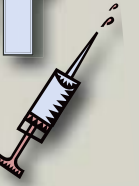
"I want to stay in the Army. The Army has invested a lot in my training, and I think I can still be valuable," Mendoza said. "That's the one thing being assigned to WTU has made possible for me. It's smart for the Army to retain as many Soldiers as possible. When you can't do your job in your unit, you feel like nobody wants you around. In a WTU, everyone has the same job – to heal."

The Lockes also look forward to a continuing career and the adjustments their stay in the WTU and their experience in Rome will bring to their lives.

"I've always thought the Army is losing its leadership skills, especially in garrison," Jonathan said. "It's hard for people to accept change, and your ability to change a group's way of thinking is done through leadership. I want to become one of those leaders who help others, help them heal, help them change."

"I understand what Soldiers go through. I think I can help. This trip has made me more certain of that."

a shot of advice



by Lt. Col. Stephen Linck
BMEDDAC

Hello, Bavaria. Thank you for continuing to send you questions and comments. I don't usually start with an introduction, but I want to personally thank every beneficiary for their patience and understanding with the new Tricare referral process.

We are working through the issues and things are getting better. I read every ICE comment and patient satisfaction survey written about our clinics and we are working to improve services.

Please continue to send your comments.

Q. What is the recommended age to stop breastfeeding? I saw a sign that said dentists prefer you to stop when the baby is 6 months old. Isn't that on the young side? I thought you could breastfeed until the baby was at least a year old.



Linck

V/r,
Stumped in Schweinfurt

A. Dear Stumped,

Is this a trick question, and why would a dentist care? There is not a simple answer because there are many factors involved in deciding when to stop. Personally, I think 6 months is a bit young and Women, Infants and Children recommends stopping around one year. Some breastfeeding advocate groups support stopping after two years. Others recommend breastfeeding until the child decides to stop.

When I was in nursing school, I personally witnessed a 5-year-old breastfeed. I think that is excessive, but who am I to judge? The point I am trying to make is there are a lot of different schools of thought. If you breastfeed for six months, then great for you. If you continue breastfeeding for two years, then great for you. Deciding when to stop is a decision for you and your child. There are a lot of local resources in the garrison and MEDDAC that can help. Most of our communities have access to lactation consultants that can help with breastfeeding. Additionally, your primary care manager or pediatrician can help you make the right decision for you and your child.

Q. I'm going to travel back to the U.S. for the holidays, but I don't want to catch the flu or something on the plane going back. Is there anything I can do to help protect myself from getting sick?

Thanks for the advice,
Flying from Freihung

A. Dear Flying,

Yes! Wash your darn hands and make sure you got your flu vaccine. Many people think they get sick on airlines because of the recycled air. I am not an expert on passenger airplane airflow, but I do know some things about how germs are spread.

Most viruses like the common cold are transmitted from one person to another by physical contact. You shake someone's hand or touch an infected object then put your hand to your mouth or nose. I also do a lot of travel so I know how difficult it is to wash your hands in the airplane lavatory. I travel with alcohol-based hand sanitizer. If the container is less than two ounces you should not have any problem getting it through security.

I also recommend getting your yearly influenza vaccine to help protect you. It won't help with the common cold, but will protect you from the flu. No one wants to be sick during the holidays so unless you are one of the special few people who never picks their nose or chews their fingernails, make sure you get the flu shot and practice good hand hygiene.

If you need a shot of advice, e-mail your question to Lt. Col. Stephen Linck at brmc-pao@amedd.army.mil.

ERMC supports Warrior Care Month

November dedicated to Warrior in Transition Soldiers, families, caregivers

Europe Regional Medical Command

News Release

HEIDELBERG, Germany — November is Warrior Care Month and leaders throughout the Army are planning events to recognize Warriors in Transition, their families and caregivers.

This year's Warrior Care Month theme is "Army Strong — Family Strong: Caring for Wounded, Ill and Injured Soldiers by Supporting Their Families and Caregivers."

"The Army, U.S. Army Europe, the Army Medical Command and many others are grateful for the contributions of our Warriors and their families, including local immediate family members as well as extended Family Members within and outside of Europe," said Lt. Col. Michael Richardson, Warrior Transition Battalion-Europe commander.

The mission of WTB-Europe

Warrior Care

For more on Warrior Care, visit these websites:

Army Wounded Warrior Program: www.aw2.army.mil

Wounded Warrior Resource Center:
www.woundedwarriorresourcecenter.com

IMCOM-Europe Soldier and Family Assistance Centers:
<http://tiny.cc/ncck7>

is to provide command and control, primary care and case management for Warriors in Transition to establish the conditions for their transition and to promote their timely return to the force or to civilian life.

The job of Soldiers assigned to a Warrior Transition Unit is to transition back to active duty or return with dignity and respect to civilian life with skills acquired while part of the WTU, which are designed to help in their successful transition.

Richardson said the support and assistance of families and caregivers is an essential element of the healing and recovery process for every wounded, ill and injured Soldier.

In addition to the Warrior Transition Battalion-Europe and its four transition units that care

for Soldiers in Germany, Belgium, and Italy, family and caregivers are important sources of support for wounded, ill or injured Soldiers.

"Families are so important for the successful transition of our warriors; they have to be included in every step of our program," Richardson said. "We actively seek ways to give them a voice in Warrior Care programs and processes."

To support families and caregivers in their new role, many services traditionally focused on wounded, ill and injured Soldiers are expanding to support and involve families and caregivers as well, including social services, counseling, resiliency training and transition planning.

"We clearly have an obligation to rehabilitate and support Sol-

Clinic closure

The Grafenwoehr Health Clinic will be closed Nov. 25-26 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. Patients should pick up any prescription refills no later than Nov. 24. In the event of a medical emergency, go to the Eschenbach Hospital, CIV 09645-850, or the Weiden Hospital, CIV 0961-3030.

CHRISTKINDLMAERKTE



Winter brings more than just frigid extremities

by Molly Hayden
Staff Writer

It's the most wonderful time of the year; sparkling lights overshadow every town, colorful decorated trees stand proudly in the middle of town squares and the aroma of hearty food and sweet treats permeate the air.

Although Christmas in Germany means quite a few things, nothing is as popular or reminiscent of the holiday season as Christmas markets (Christkindlmarkt), and Germany is deservedly famous for them.

The history of the traditional markets goes back to the late Middle Ages. For hundreds of years, merchants have erected small wooden huts in the centers of cities and towns all across Germany around Christmas, and artisans peddle handicrafts, baked goods, regional cuisine and millions of liters of gluehwein (to help keep Jack Frost at bay, of course.)

The Dresden Christmas market, first held in 1434, is one of the oldest and still attracts approximately two million visitors a year.

Nuremberg is arguably Germany's most famous Christmas market, but well-known historic cities like Regensburg and Koeln make captivating picture-perfect holiday market settings, as well.

Spectators from around the world travel to the German markets to peruse through the handmade wares, one-of-a-kind art and baked goodies. From hand-carved wooden ornaments and Nativity scenes, to jewelry and aromatic candles, the Christmas market is a one-stop holiday shop.

Alzey
Nov. 22 - Dec. 19
Open daily
11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Baden-Baden
Nov. 23 - Dec. 26
Open daily 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Nov. 23 5 - 9 p.m.
and Dec. 24 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Bamberg
Nov. 23 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Bernkastel-Kues
Nov. 20 - Dec. 19
Mon. - Thu.
11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Fri. - Sat.
11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Closed Sundays

Darmstadt
Nov. 22 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Sat.
10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Dresden
Nov. 25 - Dec. 24
Sun. - Thu.
10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Fri. - Sat.,
10 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Dec. 24 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Duesseldorf
Nov. 18 - Dec. 23
Sun. - Thu. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Closed Sundays

Frankfurt am Main
Nov. 24 - Dec. 22
Mon. - Sat.
10 a.m. - 9 p.m.;
Sun. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Garmisch
Dec. 3 - 27
Open daily 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Heidelberg
Nov. 24 - Dec. 22
Open daily
11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Kassel
Nov. 22 - Dec. 23
Open daily
11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Koblenz
Nov. 19 - Dec. 22
Mon. - Thu. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Koeln
Nov. 22 - Dec. 23
Sun. - Thu.
11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Fri. - Sat.
10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Leipzig
Nov. 23 - Dec. 22
Open daily
10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Mainz
Nov. 25 - Dec. 23
Sun. - Thu. 11 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Fri - Sat. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Mannheim
Nov. 25 - Dec. 23
Open daily 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Michelstadt
Nov. 26 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Fri. 2 - 8 p.m.
Sat. - Sun. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Munich
Nov. 25 - Dec. 23
Open daily
11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Nuremberg
Nov. 26 - Dec. 24
Mon. - Thu. 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sun. 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Dec. 24 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Neu-Ulm
Nov. 26 - Jan. 2
Open daily 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Regensburg
Nov. 25 - Dec. 23
Sun. - Wed. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Thu. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Rothenburg ob der Tauber
Nov. 26 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Thu. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Fri. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sat. 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sun. 10:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Rudesheim
Nov. 22 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Fri. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sat. - Sun. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Saarbruecken
Nov. 25 - Dec. 23
Open daily
11 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Schweinfurt
Nov. 25 - Dec. 24
Mon. - Sat.
10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Dec. 24
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Soest
Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Open daily 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Weiden
Nov. 25 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Stuttgart
Nov. 24 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Wiesbaden
Nov. 23 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Thu. 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Fri. - Sat. 10:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Sun. noon - 9 p.m.

Trier
Nov. 22 - Dec. 22
Mon. - Wed.
10:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Thu. - Sat.
10:30 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Wuerzburg
Nov. 26 - Dec. 23
Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sun. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Retiree Corner

Retirement Appreciation Day touted as a success

by Retired Sgt. Maj.
Dave Stewart
Grafenwoehr Garrison Retiree Council

An anxious group of military retirees stood front and center before the dental and medical clinics at the crack of dawn on a brisk Friday morning in late October. They wanted assurance they could take advantage of the clinics’ services offered at the garrison’s annual Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD).

Across post at the Human Resources Center, Brig. Gen. Steven Salazar, commander of the Joint Multinational Training Command, officially opened the event. The CG commended all who had served a career for the nation and urged them to take advantage of the full range of services available. He cited the ongoing deployments of the combat units stationed at Grafenwoehr and the tough job these Soldiers were performing for the nation who were following in the footsteps of those who served before them. Salazar along with retired Master Sgt. Marcelo Reyes from Berlin and James Holliman, commander of the Tower Post 10692 Chapter of the VFW, cut the traditional cake donated by the VFW to open the event.

Retirees and annuitants moved quickly to various stations. Legal assistance was a hot stop for most for the important will updates and powers of attorney, and of course, taxes that take on an added twist when living permanently overseas. The VA was added to this year’s event for the first time. David Del Vecchio met with over 60 retirees and family members who had questions on benefits and the administrative matters associated with their service.

The U.S. Consulate Federal Benefits Unit was also on hand for those needing information on Social Security benefits or filing procedures. There were representatives from the Chaplain Services; Military Customs

and Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Many had their ID cards renewed or started the passport renewal process.

\$19,000 recovered

A Defence Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) representative flew in from St. Louis to help retirees and annuitants with retiree pay issues. Tony Cifano of DFAS helped annuitants recoup close to \$19,000 in pay due.

“This made our day,” said Keith Harry, garrison retirement services officer. “One widow was very moved with the sudden windfall that was uncovered in her favor, and there were similar cases.”

“The DFAS visit always reaps benefits for many and it’s the best time to update records to ensure everything is in order for one’s wife before she becomes your widow,” added Mario Mena, the casualty assistance officer and deputy RSO. Patricia Mallard of Survivor Outreach Services, a new Armywide program, described program benefits to spouses of deceased service members.

“This is a great Army initiative and survivors of deceased retired Soldiers will find the benefits extraordinary,” said retired Sgt. Maj. Don Norris, a long time member of the Army in Europe Retiree Council, who attended the RAD and presented a briefing on the status of retiree issues working at the HQ USAREUR level.

New to this year’s RAD were stations to explain the operations and benefits of the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP), and the United Services Organization (USO) that now has a permanent garrison presence.

Record turnout

This was the first year the garrison experimented with holding the RAD on a weekday vice a Saturday. “We wanted to try it,” said Mary Cooper, garrison Director of Human

Resources. “We have all of our support employees working anyway, and this would be a cost-saving venture, particularly for the clinic civilian personnel.”

Garrison staff is still gathering input from the different division chiefs and is evaluating retiree critiques to determine the success of the change to a weekday.

“It’s too soon to assess the total success and the way ahead, but we did have over 290 participants, which is a 25 percent increase from last year. However, we want to be certain that we didn’t miss anything and examine the results for improvement,” added Cooper.

The retiree subcouncils in Berlin and Garmisch arrived by chartered busses.

“Since we are located a long way from the flagpole, and not close to AAFES and DeCA facilities, this is a special day for the Berliners each year,” said Lt. Col. Bill Joyce, who, as the Berlin Retiree Council president, represents 300 military retirees and annuitants who live in the former divided city.

“We come to this not only to take care of our affairs, but also to shop,” quipped Joyce. Retired Lt. Col. Carlos Trevino, Garmisch Retiree Sub Council president, said: “The medical and dental services are of special interest to us, but ensuring retirees and spouses are prepared for death overseas is of course a high priority to all of us, and this is the time and place to get things straight.”

Retirees unanimously expressed gratitude for the great garrison support. “The garrison went all out to make this day special,” said retired Sgt. 1st Class Larry Walks.

Medical services

The dental team had a busy day. They provided oral cancer screenings and cleanings, services that retirees particularly value. Eighty-six retirees

and spouses took advantage of the dental services.

The Medics also pulled out all the stops to provide a full menu of preventive medical services including immunizations, diabetes screenings, nutritional and physical therapy counselling, and for the first time this year cholesterol checks. The Optometry and Audiometer clinics also were open for business checking the sight and sound of the old soldiers. According to Colonel (Ret) Melenna Compton, a retired Nurse, the support and effort of the medical staff was first class and very caring. “Many of our retirees are aging and it’s important that they have preventive medical exams and procedures” said Compton.

Community donations

Retirement Services Officer Keith Harry expressed appreciation to the agencies that donated funds for refreshments and beverages, as well as table decorations or other services. He specifically singled out the Warrant Officers Association Nord Bayern Silver Chapter, The Vilseck Community and Spouses Club, the Grafenwoehr Commissary, The Service Credit Union, the Tower Chapter of the VFW, BOSS and the Junior ROTC of the Vilseck High School who opened the event with a smart presentation of colors.

RADs are held at Army garrisons annually. The information on the date and place for the next scheduled event will be published well in advance in the IMCOM Retiree Bulletin and in Army Echos.

If you have a comment on this year’s RAD send a note to me at Box R-6, CMR 415, APO AE 09114 or e-mail SGM85@t-online.de and I will pass to the garrison retirement services officer for consideration.

Editor’s Note: Retired Sgt. Maj. Dave Stewart is the president of the Grafenwoehr Garrison Retiree Council.

Property loss 101 Claims for property damage can be tricky

by Brad Huestis
JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

Soldiers and Army civilian employees may seek compensation for property loss and damage sustained incident to their service through the U.S. Army claims system. The fall and winter seasons bring with it the possibility of automobile windshields shattered by rocks or other debris thrown by lawn-mowers and weed-eaters.

The government is not automatically liable for damages caused by rocks thrown on post by lawn-mowers. Under the Army claims regulation, the claimant must be able to show that the person cutting the grass was a Soldier or government employee, was negligent by failing to clear the area of obvious hazards, by failing to discharge cuttings away from roadways or parking lots, or by operating a mower known to be defective.

Claimants should also be mindful that the government is never responsible for losses when caused by a private person, such as residents of military quarters mowing their own lawns or contractors hired to come on post to provide services.

Just as the summer PCS cycle is the best time for reviewing homeowner’s and renter’s policies that insure household goods; it is also a very good time to check automobile coverage. For example, some insurance companies will send a windshield repair company to repair small chips on-the-spot, at no charge to the policy holder. That’s a much better deal than having to pay a deductible or working to substantiate a claim that the Army claims system might not be able to pay. Questions about how to file claims should be directed to the local military claims office.



Huestis

News is addictive. If you need more, subscribe to USAG Grafenwoehr’s daily newsletter. E-mail usaggnews@eur.army.mil to get your daily news fix.

What’s Happening

Garmisch Briefs

Mozart’s Don Giovanni

Nov. 24: Enjoy this classic opera as it blends comedy, melodrama and supernatural elements into a truly enjoyable experience. If the bus is not full of concert anyone is welcomed to come spend the evening in Munich! Cost: \$12 for transportation only.

Concert – Bruckner’s Symphony #9

Nov. 30: Listen to the last symphony Anton Bruckner worked on, leaving the last movement incomplete at the time of his death in 1896. Or join us for the ride! Cost: \$12 for transportation only.

Holiday Tree Lighting

Dec. 2: Share the fun as the children of deployed personnel illuminate the garrison tree, beginning at 5 p.m. next to Bldg. 203 (headquarters). Warm refreshments, a Christkindlmarkt, the GEMS choir, and a visit from Mr. & Mrs. Kringle. No cost.

School Winter Program

Dec. 15: The show begins at the Garmisch Elementary/Middle School at 6:30 p.m. Each class will offer a small skit, and the GEMS choir will perform. Refreshments. No cost.

Tailgate Party Bus

Dec. 18: World Cup tailgate party bus to Val Gardena-Groeden in the Italian Dolomites. Join the fun and root for the U.S. Ski team. Cost: \$30

What’s happening?

For the latest news on current events like fests, concerts, parties, parades and more in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Southern Bavaria, to post your own local news, or just to see the latest photo of the Zugspitze, visit the USAG Garmisch Facebook page. Updated daily, always relevant and fresh as a morning brezel.

Unless noted, all FMWR events meet at the Pete Burke Center. To register for the events contact the staff at the Pete Burke Community Center, DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638, or email us at Garmisch.FMWR.odr@us.army.mil.

Graf/Vilseck Briefs

Family Education Fair

Don’t miss this after-school event for our families, Netza-berg Elementary School PTSA’s Family Education Fair, Dec. 1, 2:45- 4:30 p.m., in the NES Multipurpose Room. The event will include family-based community, school and education information, along with Christmas shopping provided by Andy’s Ceramics Polish Pottery. In addition, attendees can learn about a great getaway at The Blue Beetroot Bed and Breakfast, and there will be a fun craft activity available for school-aged children and an after-school snack for all.

Live basket auction

The Grafenwoehr PTA will hold a silent auction Dec. 9, 6 p.m. at Grafenwoehr Elementary School. This fun event will benefit Grafenwoehr Elementary School through the PTA. Often

silent auctions are held but rarely do we have a chance to attend a live auction. All kinds of great stuff will be up for bid at the auction including themed baskets, a quilt and more. Call 475-7133 for more.

Holiday gift wrapping

Now until Dec. 24, at the Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels PX, the American Red Cross is sponsoring gift wrapping tables. Volunteers will be happy to wrap gifts of all sizes. Donations will go to support organizations within your U.S. Army Garrison.

JMTC OCS Board

The 7th Joint Multinational Training Command is hosting an OCS board. The board will be held Jan. 7. Packets are due to JMTC’s G1 no later than Dec. 17. This board is open to all enlisted personnel and warrant officers with less than 10 years of service who hold at least a bachelor’s degree. Interested personnel are asked to contact Sgt. Lee Auguste at 475-6953 or lee.m.auguste@eur.army.mil.

Estate claims

Anyone having claims on or obligations to the estate of Pfc. Tony A. Fabery of HHC 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade, should contact the following summary court martial officer, Capt. Robert J. Panas, at DSN 475-4181 or e-mail Robert.panas@eur.army.mil.

Hohenfels Briefs

Flu Vaccinations

Flu shots are now available at

the Health Clinic. Vaccinations are available to all Hohenfels community members. For more information call the Immunization Clinic at DSN 466-4541.

Ethnic celebration

Nov. 29: Celebrate Native American Heritage month. Activities will include keynote speaker CW4 Michael Sauer, music and dance demonstrations, food sampling of Indian Tacos, and cultural displays. Events run from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Community Activities Center on Nov. 29. For more information call MSG Chris Mulvihill, Equal Opportunity Advisor, at DSN 466-4102.

Unit level basketball

Through Nov. 29: Sports and Fitness is looking for teams to participate in the upcoming unit level Basketball program. Register your team from now until Nov. 29, to participate in the league which will begin on Dec 6. For more information call DSN 466-2883/2868 or stop by the Post Gym, Bldg. 88 for a letter of intent.

Holiday fundraising

Through Nov. 30: The senior class of Hohenfels High School is sponsoring a holiday fundraising event. The class of 2011 is selling beautiful Poinsettia plants for \$10 each. Place your order at the high school from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Nov. 30. You may also place an order by calling DSN 466-3162 or CIV 09472-909-608. Plants will be delivered to HHS on Dec. 1.

Holiday Tree Lighting

Dec. 3: The 2010 Hohenfels Holiday Tree Lighting will take place, Dec. 3 at 4 p.m., in front of the main post chapel. Games and activities will be in the elementary school’s multipurpose room.

English service

Dec. 4: The Catholic community of Hohenburg would like to invite the American community to attend an English Catholic Service at the Hohenburg Catholic church. Service begins 7 p.m. There will be also an annual Christmas market in Hohenburg at that time. For more, contact Petra Grieb-Lange at Petragl204@hotmail.com.

Indoor scuba diving

Dec. 4: Indoor Scuba Diving is an introductory course that will allow you to experience the underwater world while staying safe and warm inside a giant indoor scuba center. Depart ODR, Bldg. H15, at 8 a.m. The price is \$150 per person and includes transportation and the introductory Scuba course. Trip must have six people registered by Nov. 22. Call DSN 466-2060 for more information and to sign up.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Ledward Library

Ledward library hosts a variety of offerings. Mondays, the junior journalists meet from 3:30-5:30 p.m. and Zeens for Teens meets from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Every Wednesday Soldier in-processing class meets at 9:30 a.m. and children’s story time & craft workshop meets at 10 a.m. Chess club for grades 4-6 meets Thursdays from 4-6 p.m. Take advantage of this cultural hub of the community. For more, call DSN 354-1740, CIV 09721-96-1740.

BOSS Thanksgiving

Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers offers an excellent gathering Nov. 24 to celebrate Thanksgiving. Join them at 6

p.m. at the Finney fitness center for Schweinfurt’s warmest and most welcoming Holiday event. For more, call DSN 353-8476, CIV 09721-96-8476.

DFAC Thanksgiving

If you’re around on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25, be sure to come to either the Ledward or Conn dining facility between 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. to partake in a Thanksgiving meal. The full menu for the day is available at the Food Service page of the Schweinfurt garrison website.

Thanksgiving bowling

Kessler bowling center is open Nov. 25 for a special holiday bowling day. Don’t let turkey-induced tiredness keep you indoors. Burn off those extra calories at Kessler lanes. For more, call DSN 354-6332, CIV 09721-96-6332.

Health clinic closure

The Schweinfurt Health Clinic will be closed Nov. 25 and 26. In the event of a medical emergency, go to the nearest German emergency room. For health-related questions, call the Tricare Nurse Advice Line, CIV 0800-825-1600.

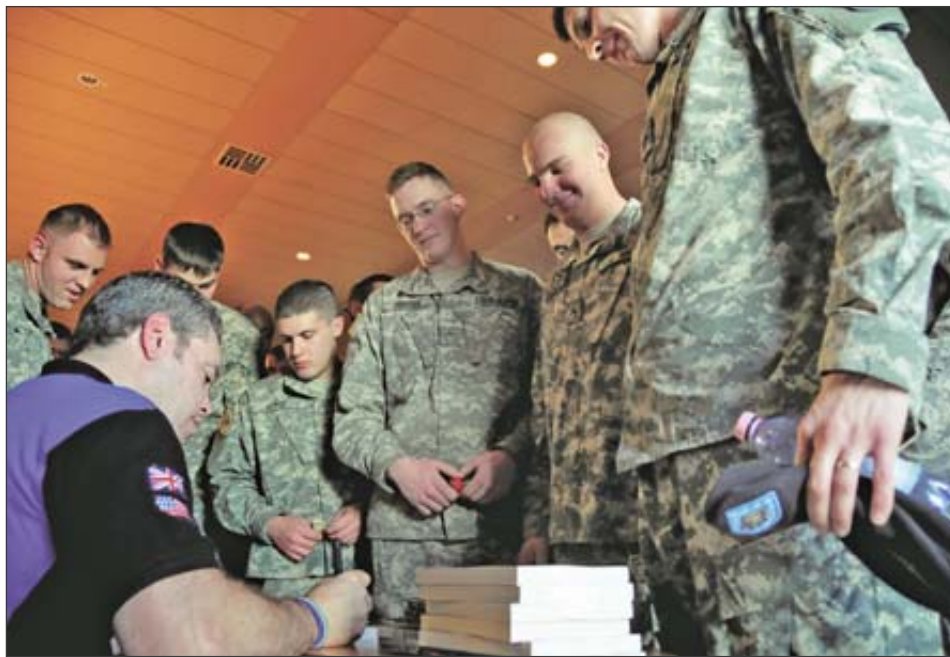
Furniture sale

The Main Exchange presents a mobile furniture sales presentation, Dec. 2 and 3, at the Finney fitness center. Come to shop for and purchase furniture normally available at the largest Exchange facilities. Call CIV 09721-80880.

Holiday Tree Lighting

Join the garrison in the lighting of the annual holiday tree, Dec. 3. The ceremony will take place at 4:30 p.m. in the Andrus Garden on Ledward Barracks. All members of the community are invited to attend.

McGrenahan uses experiences to drive point home



Bernie McGrenahan signs autographs for Soldiers after his performance at the Tower Theater, Nov. 16. More than 500 Soldiers from the 66th Armor Regiment attended the comedy show, which focused on drug and alcohol use. "It was hilarious," said Sgt. Brenda Cousley. "But his story had a lesson that everyone was paying attention to. This type of behavior could happen to anyone and he showed us some of the danger signs."

“You can’t look for the differences in my story and yours and deny you have a problem. The key is to look for the similarities and get the help that is needed.”

Bernie McGrenahan
Stand-up Comedian

drug abuse, wasn’t enough to sober McGrenahan up and he eventually fell into a deep stage of denial about his problem.

But for the renowned stand-up comedian, life is funny — funny “ha-ha” and funny “ironic.”

The mishaps of his life are now swept up into a comedy routine that has changed the way Army Substance Abuse Program, Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention Training and Sexual Assault Response Coordinators educate members of the armed forces. It’s a different approach to training and one that keeps the audience captivated and attentive, according to Spc. Clayton Lunz.

“We hear the same information on the effects of drugs and alcohol

and at times it can be redundant,” said Lunz. “But this show was different, lively. He didn’t preach, he just talked and we listened.”

“And it was hilarious,” said Sgt. Brenda Cousley. “But his story had a lesson that everyone was paying attention to. This type of behavior could happen to anyone and he showed us some of the danger signs.”

McGrenahan started the Alcohol, Drug and Suicide prevention training program coined “Happy Hour” nine years after he took his last drink.

First performing in colleges and universities across the states, McGrenahan soon teamed up with Army Community Service to aid in the education of Soldiers

and other members of the armed forces.

“I am a just extension of their training,” said the humble McGrenahan. “I have a personal testimony that I can reach from and share with the Soldiers.”

McGrenahan stated by sharing his experiences he hopes it will help Soldiers recognize troubling behavior in themselves or their battle buddies.

“You can’t look for the differences in my story and yours and deny you have a problem,” said McGrenahan. “The key is to look for the similarities and get the help that is needed.”

The show made spectators laugh. It made their hearts sink into the pits of their stomach and sobered them into the realization of the negative effects of drugs and alcohol, all while a smile remained planted on their lips.

Nothing was sacred in McGrenahan’s comedy routine, but everything had an important lesson.

For more information on McGrenahan and his “Happy Hour” tour, visit www.comedyisthecure.com.

Reservists bring artistic firepower to culinary competition in Luxemburg

Continued from page 3

years for a month before going to the international competitions. The sculptures are made of marzipan that is put on an armature made of aluminum and copper wire. The marzipan is colored with food coloring or spices such as nutmeg or cinnamon. From preparing the armature to applying the marzipan, it takes Skinner up to four days to complete the figurine’s unique design.

Skinner says cooking at an international competition cannot be compared to cooking at a dining facility because it is the type of cooking done for holidays or other special occasions. But, he adds, doing it enhances the chefs’ skills and helps them to do better at the DFACs.

All preparation and cooking is done using standard equipment, no special kitchens or Emeril style setups; it’s the same equipment used when Soldiers are deployed in the field.

He expressed his gratitude to the former Army Reserve food service advisor, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Daniel Ormsby, for paving the way for Army Reserve Soldiers to be on the U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team.

The process involves considerably more planning and preparation than it does for an active duty Soldier, as Reserve Soldiers must obtain orders but also coordinate time off with their civilian employer.

Parker and Vaughan, for example, had to save up vacation time to be on

the team while Skinner, as a freelance sculptor, is able to manage his time more independently.

“As a team we enjoy each other’s company after work at dinner we try to let our minds escape the kitchen,” said Parker, a native of Haines City, Fla.

“This is hard to do because what do you do at dinner — you eat ... and it comes down to the food about flavors, textures and, of course, how you would have cooked it.”

“We were working on the cold food table. It consists of seven, themed three-course meals that are becoming more beautiful every day,” said Parker. “By the time we get to Luxemburg they are going to be on point.”



Photo by Norbert Wittl

Local mayors, Col. John M. Spiszer (third from right) and Lt. Col. Kevin J. Quarles (far right) sign the Sustainable Communities Partnership at Parsberg Castle, Sept. 29.

Covenant builds stronger sense of community

Continued from page 1

surrounding communities, the Sustainability Covenant represents an increased commitment to a partnership at the county level.

Neumarkt County Commissioner Albert Loehner said, “The U.S. garrison, the county and the towns combine together a cooperative and problem-free relationship. We have common plans, ideas and visions, and with the agreement we are entering a new and fruitful phase of our cooperation.”

“Sustainability is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” said Lt. Col. Kevin J. Quarles, garrison commander. He added that one of the garrison’s primary goals is to convert its energy production from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy.

“That’s a goal we cannot accomplish without the assistance of our host nation partners,” he said.

Initial steps toward such energy conversions began in March, when Neumarkt County hosted a “Green Energy” tour for officials from Hohenfels and Grafenwoehr. Locations visited included a biogas heat and electricity production facility, a solar power plant, local windmills and other sustainable facilities.

But sustainability is more than just concern for the environment, Quarles said. “It is about our communities and economic systems and how they will survive into the future.”

“Our only limitation in this partnership is our imagination,” said Quarles. “Anything from photovoltaic and biomass energy to some-

thing as small as a find-it guide so that our Soldiers and families can locate off-post resources more easily is within the realm of possibility.”

Other areas intended for development include improvements to government-leased housing, increased interaction between the military and host nation schools, and increased access to off-post retail goods and services, including medical care providers.

For the government of the Upper Palatinate, which supports the cooperation project, Axel Koch said: “Today is an intermediate step to further strengthen the cooperation between the County of Neumarkt, the surrounding communities and the U.S. Army.”

He expressed hope that the covenant would serve as an example to other military communities in Germany.

“For me, the signing is the confirmation of the decadeslong good relationship between the U.S. Army and the community,” said Bernhard Graf, mayor of Hohenfels. He said he looked forward to even closer cooperations through this agreement.

Quarles acknowledged the historic signing was merely a first step in the garrison’s strategic action plan to improve sustainability through community partnerships. But planning began in earnest with the first meeting of the Community Development Network, Nov. 24.

“This is truly a home away from home for all of the U.S. Army here in the Oberpfalz,” Spiszer said. “We greatly desire to continue being good members of the greater community in the area and want to work on all aspects of what that means.”

Environmental management adds much-needed pinch of movie magic

by Nathan Van Schaik
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

SCHWEINFURT, Germany — The military is notorious for rehashing outdated videos and tired old commercials, but luckily there are people like Lothar Rueckert around to breathe life into them.

Recently, Rueckert and members of the Schweinfurt community, along with a professional filming crew, coordinated efforts to re-film a 15-year-old version of the garrison’s environmental management program video.

Lothar Rueckert, the lone environmental specialist here on the garrison, is a burly man. His large frame and grizzled beard complement a thick Bavarian accent. He wears blue jeans with his leather vest and is prone slipping into his native German tongue and slapping friends on the back in jest. But his soft disposition and passion for the environment transcend his brawny, menacing look.

“He’s easygoing,” said Staff Sgt. Nathan Moore, who played the film’s lead role as narrator. “He really cares about the environment and definitely loves his job.”

Rueckert has worked for the garrison for 34 years. His job is to manage the environmental program. “I’m the primary advisor for the command on environmental concerns and issues,” he said. “I also advise the units and organizations on environmental laws, requirements, updates and changes.”

A zeal for the environment coupled with the drive to keep the community environmentally conscious led him to remake a movie he had helped launch 15 years ago. “I contacted my conservation support contractor and I told them that I would like to update it to the current standard, the current vision,” he said. He then contacted a professional firm, Docuvista, who produced it.

“We determined the content of the film, what I wanted



Photo by Kai Battenberg

Lothar Rueckert, right, assists a professional filming crew in the production of the new environmental management video at the hazardous waste site on Conn Barracks. Many members from the Schweinfurt community participated or performed in the making of the film.

to put out. I wanted to present environmental compliance, prevention, the conservation pillar, restoration, sustainability — to cover the entire program,” Rueckert said.

Rueckert didn’t receive guidance or orders to make a film. What makes the video notable is that no Army regulations mandate it. No check in the box here.

“It’s not a requirement, but it makes the awareness program more visible,” he said.

Many members from the Schweinfurt community participated or performed in the making of the film. Production of the movie drew family members, volunteers from the Free Cycle Center, employees from the Directorate of Public Works and Soldiers from the training facility.

To learn more about the environmental program, or to watch the 15-minute video, visit www.schweinfurt.army.mil/directorates/dpw/environmental/environmental_video.htm.